

**South Dakota National Guard**  
**Public Affairs Office**  
2823 West Main St.  
Rapid City, S.D. 57702

Phone 605-737-6721  
E-mail [PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil](mailto:PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil)

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**MEDIA ALERT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**147th commander says his “troops are ready”**

*By Roger C. Anderson, Information Officer*

FORT CHAFFE, Ark. – Commanders in South Dakota’s lone field artillery battalion didn’t waste any time in getting their units prepared for the war zone during a two-week annual training exercise that concluded Friday.

The wartime training at Fort Chaffe, Ark., provided a ‘jump start’ to a higher level of readiness for the 300 Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 147th FA, who will mobilize in mid-April to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Last year we fired rockets, but four months ago we switched over and began training for our deployment mission that focuses on facility security,” said Lt. Col. Dave Chase, battalion commander. “The troops’ morale was very high throughout the exercise and it appears everyone is ready for the next step.”

According to Chase, the upcoming mobilization will be the second deployment for 60 percent of the soldiers of his battalion that includes units from the Headquarters of Watertown and Sisseton, Aberdeen’s Battery A, Yankton’s Battery C, and the 147<sup>th</sup> Forward Support Company of Mitchell, Sioux Falls, and Webster.

Last October, about 180 members from the battalion’s Bravo Battery, Salem and Sioux Falls, returned home after serving a year-long deployment in Iraq.

Most of the members traveled to Fort Chaffe by bus while others convoyed about 30 military vehicles to the post. Surprisingly, the 147th was the only unit training there at the time, which allowed better training opportunities over the two week period.

“We got lots of trigger time,” said Chase, referring to the small arms and crew-served weapons training performed. “Our goal was to finish up on individual soldier skills and start training as a team.”

Other training included convoy operations, reacting to attacks by improvised explosive devices, search-methods at a check point, and medical evacuations training.

Despite facing another tour of duty in Southwest Asia, Chase says there haven't been any problems motivating his soldiers.

"Basically, they want to get on with the mission," he said, "but they all know the value of training and being ready for any situation so that makes them work even harder."

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Photo Cutline – Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, set up a hasty check point during the annual training period at Fort Chaffe, Ark., Jan. 10-24.

Link to photo: [https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/Hasty\\_Checkpoint.JPG](https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/Hasty_Checkpoint.JPG)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Maj. Brendan Murphy at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail [brendan.murphy1@us.army.mil](mailto:brendan.murphy1@us.army.mil).

**NOTE:** Since the terrorist attacks on America, the South Dakota National Guard has mobilized more than 3,100 Soldiers and 1,000 Airmen in support of the Global War on Terror.

Currently, more than 70 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard remain on duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations throughout Southwest Asia and Europe. More than 4,300 National Guardsmen are available in South Dakota to provide support for state and national emergencies and homeland defense.